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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

22 February 1951

*Fitch*  
SUBJECT: NIE-29: *Prospect for an attack on Yugoslavia during 1951.*  
YUGOSLAVIA

THE PROBLEM

To assess the capabilities and intentions of the USSR and its European Satellites with respect to action against Yugoslavia during 1951.

CONCLUSIONS

*Like behind satellite*  
*1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito Government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure.*

*cannot*  
2. We believe that Tito's regime will not be overthrown during 1951 by a Soviet-inspired coup or by internal revolt *and that*, therefore, overt armed invasion by Soviet or Satellite forces *eliminating the Tito Govt.* will be required if the Soviet objective is to be accomplished

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during 1951.)

3. <sup>2. Jhr</sup> Recent military build-up in the Satellite countries ~~increase in armed forces, stockpiling, re-equipment, gasoline conservation, stepping-up of war industry, etc.~~ points to a great increase in Satellite capabilities and readiness for military action.

4. Against invasion by the armies of the four neighboring Satellite powers (Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania), organized Yugoslav resistance could be expected to continue for about three months, but probably for no more than four months under the most favorable defensive conditions. Guerilla-type resistance would continue after collapse of organized resistance.

5. In the event of full-scale invasion by Soviet <sup>as well as Satellite</sup> forces, Yugoslav forces would be incapable of maintaining organized resistance for more than about two weeks unless ~~they were~~ withdrawn and concentrated in the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro. Even ~~if~~ so ~~concentrated~~, they could not continue organized resistance for more than one month.

6. Substantial Western military assistance might enable Yugoslavia successfully to defend itself against a Satellite

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attack, and to check a Soviet attack for considerably more than a month. However, such assistance would have to be provided several months in advance of an attack, and to be in a form which could be readily integrated into Yugoslav units, which are now chiefly equipped with weapons of Soviet, German and Yugoslav manufacture.

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## DISCUSSION

### SOVIET OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO YUGOSLAVIA

1. The Kremlin aims to eliminate the Tito Government as soon as practicable, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the European Satellite structure. Soviet control of Yugoslavia would greatly facilitate Soviet efforts to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean area and would eliminate a dangerous salient in the southeast European front of the Soviet bloc. Yugoslavia offers an approach for Soviet attacks into Greece or Italy, and is a potential threat to the southern flank of any Soviet advance into Western Europe. Moreover, and probably more basic in Communist calculations, the continued survival of the Tito Government as the only Communist regime not subservient to Moscow is an ideological threat to the Kremlin's control of the world Communist movement.

### CURRENT STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF TITO'S REGIME

2. The Tito regime is stable. Internal security forces are large and efficient, and have dealt successfully with

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active opposition elements. Efforts of the Cominform to penetrate and undermine the regime by subversive means have thus far failed conspicuously. There is no evidence of effective organized opposition within the country and there are no serious personal rivals to Tito himself.

3. A majority of the Yugoslav population are non-Communists or even anti-Communists. Living standards are lower now than before the war. The resentments caused by the nationalization of the economy, by the campaign against religion, and by the development of police state techniques is still strong. In the party hierarchy there is some criticism of the mal-administration of the import program and of unsatisfactory economic progress. It is always possible that some of Tito's followers, though seemingly loyal, may be awaiting an opportunity to improve their fortune at the expense of their leader.

4. Tito's freedom of political action is hampered by his paradoxical ideological position. Any considerable retreat from Communist theory or practice and any conspicuous associations with the Western Powers give substance to the Kremlin's contention that Tito is a traitor to Communism and might cost him the allegiance of some of his more zealous Marxist followers who are indispensable functionaries in his

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totalitarian regime. On the other hand, if he adheres too faithfully to Communist dogma, he may antagonize the Western Powers and non-Communist elements within Yugoslavia whose support is essential if national independence is to be maintained.

5. However, most of the Yugoslav people prefer the present regime to the reestablishment of alien control from Moscow particularly since the relaxation of some of the more unpopular totalitarian measures. Tito's bold and successful stand in the face of mounting Soviet and Satellite pressure has appealed strongly to Yugoslav national pride. Even the long-standing national minority tensions in the country are relatively quiescent. The improvement of Yugoslav relations with the Western Powers, and particularly with the US, has met favorable popular response. In the event of invasion, the great majority of Yugoslavs would support Tito and carry out what resistance was militarily possible.

SOVIET CAPABILITIES FOR OVERTHROWING THE TITO REGIME BY  
MEASURES SHORT OF WAR

6. Since the break between Tito and the Kremlin, an economic blockade has been maintained by the Soviet orbit countries against Yugoslavia. Diplomatic relations have also been virtually suspended and Yugoslav diplomats have been

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harassed and intimidated by Cominform agents. Cominform propaganda has maintained a continuous campaign against Tito, and has portrayed him as a lifelong "Fascist agent" and a willing tool of Western imperialists in a conspiracy to attack the Soviet orbit. The economic and diplomatic isolation of Yugoslavia was for a time extremely dangerous to Tito's regime; without the support of the Western Powers, Tito might have collapsed. This danger now seems to be over.

7. Attempts have been made, and will undoubtedly be continued to undermine Tito's regime by the infiltration of subversive agents and saboteurs. Although the Yugoslavs are not easily frightened, Moscow may have some success in spreading the fear of war among Yugoslavs who live near the vulnerable frontiers. The USSR may attempt to stage internal uprisings in Yugoslavia, linked with guerrilla raids from the neighboring Cominform countries. It may subvert elements of Tito's own party who hope for an opportunity to succeed to power.

8. Assassination of Tito by Cominform agents is a continuing possibility. Tito's death would be a major blow to the regime, but would not automatically cause its collapse. Tito's lieutenants are as much committed to opposition to the Cominform as Tito himself. They would probably con-

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time to adhere to the present principles of the regime. As a martyr to the Cominform, Tito might well be a source of strength in consolidating support for the present regime within Yugoslavia. Although stresses and strains would eventually develop in the absence of Tito's strong personality and leadership, they would not in themselves be likely to cause the overthrow of the regime during 1951.

9. Except for the possible ramification that might follow Tito's assassination, we believe that none of the methods short of war which the Kremlin may use will overthrow or even seriously weaken the present Yugoslav regime during 1951. Over a period of some three years the Kremlin has already applied to Yugoslavia the strongest economic, political, and psychological pressures of which it is capable. Tito has not been appreciably weakened by them; indeed his successful stand has apparently strengthened his position with the Yugoslav people. He is thoroughly conversant with the tricks and techniques which may be used against him. The period of his greatest vulnerability to such methods is past. It will now require armed invasion to overthrow his regime.

YUGOSLAV MILITARY FORCES AVAILABLE FOR DEFENSE

10. The Yugoslav Army has a current strength of approximately 275,000 men and could be expanded in 30 days to 600,000

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men organized in 40 fully equipped divisions. Yugoslavia has a further mobilization potential up to 1,000,000 men six months after commencing mobilization, but current and future availability of weapons would restrict arms for additional units to light infantry weapons and some field artillery. This additional manpower would assure an adequate flow of replacements. Yugoslav weapons are generally of good quality but heterogenous, with Soviet and German World War II models predominating. The outstanding weaknesses in equipment are in tanks (total strength about 400), anti-tank weapons, and anti-aircraft artillery. Yugoslav effectiveness would decline rapidly in the event of hostilities because of inability to replace material lost in combat. The Yugoslav Air Force totals approximately 650 planes, but is hampered by a shortage of spare parts. The Yugoslav Navy is small and inefficient but is nevertheless capable of successfully opposing any Satellite naval operation.

11. Yugoslav forces are capable of good combat performance, particularly if committed to the defense of the mountainous area of Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Montenegro rather than the Danubian Plain. Many of the officers and non-commissioned officers had combat experience in World War II and since then have had fairly good training.

12. Under present circumstances, only limited improvement can be expected in Yugoslav capabilities during 1951. The Yugoslavs are currently attempting to purchase arms and equipment from foreign sources, particularly ammunition and spare parts for Soviet and German equipment now in use. Some material, such as small arms and light artillery, is being manufactured locally, but production is slow, and it will be some time before new equipment can be produced in significant quantities. Western military assistance in the form of weapons and equipment which could readily be integrated into Yugoslav units would materially strengthen Yugoslav defensive capabilities if the program were commenced several months before an invasion. Combat capabilities could be further increased by the acquisition of certain items of equipment, such as anti-tank weapons and rocket launchers from the West, but only after Yugoslav personnel had been trained in their use. Major assistance would be required to bring the Yugoslav Air Force to equality with the combined air forces of neighboring Satellites.

SOVIET AND SATELLITE ARMED FORCES AVAILABLE FOR INVASION OF  
YUGOSLAVIA

13. Soviet forces presently disposed in countries adjacent to Yugoslavia consist of six line divisions -- two each

in Austria, Hungary, and Rumania -- and are insufficient by themselves for a successful invasion of Yugoslavia. Additional forces could, however, readily be drawn from the USSR to make up an adequate force for an invasion.

14. The armies of Albania, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria have been increasing steadily and now total approximately 473,000 men, organized in 36 divisions. In the case of the latter three countries, strength is in excess of peace treaty limitations. With

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\* Since January 1, 1950, the ground force strength of the individual satellites has undergone the following changes:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>1 January 1950</u>	<u>Treaty Limitation</u>
Albania	45,000	50,000	—
Bulgaria	154,000	80,000	65,000
Hungary	68,000	36,000	70,000
Rumania	205,000	113,000	138,000

In addition, the following internal security forces are fully trained, armed and suitable for combat: Albania, 15,000; Bulgaria, 43,500; Hungary, 5,000; and Rumania, 66,000.

The apparent decrease from 50,000 to 45,000 in Albania reflects a revised estimate, not an actual reduction in troop strength

partial mobilization over a period of at least 30 days, it could be increased to 925,000 men organized in 47 line divisions, 11 combat brigades, and supporting independent regiments. Additional equipment would be required, but this could readily be supplied by the USSR by the end of April 1951. The armed forces of these Satellites are now estimated to be equipped with approximately 1,000 tanks, and reinforcements could be obtained on short notice from the estimated 700 tanks now with Soviet forces in these Satellites. Satellite air forces total approximately 900 combat aircraft; their combat effectiveness is low. Satellite naval forces are negligible.

15. The fighting qualities of these forces would be at least good in comparison with Yugoslav forces, particularly in successful offensive operations. Bulgarian and Rumanian forces are the best trained and equipped of the four Satellite armies, but all Satellite forces would have the major advantage of extensive and timely Soviet logistical support for an invasion of Yugoslavia.

16. There exists a further substantial Satellite reserve in the armies of Czechoslovakia and Poland. While, in case of need, these reserves might be thrown against Yugoslavia, the political and logistical problems involved in their use appear so great that this possibility seems remote.

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VULNERABILITY OF YUGOSLAVIA TO INVASION

17. Most of the areas along Yugoslavia's extended frontiers are highly vulnerable to invasion from the neighboring Satellite states. Northwestern Yugoslavia, including Slovenia and northern Croatia, could be quickly cut off from the rest of the country by a drive southward from Hungary through Zagreb and toward Fiume. The country north of the Sava River between Zagreb and the Danube could also be easily invaded at a number of points along the Hungarian frontier. The Danubian Plain north of Belgrade is especially vulnerable to armored attacks from either Hungary or Rumania. The Belgrade area would be hard to defend against attacks across the Danubian Plain or from the south through the Morava River valley. Yugoslav Macedonia could be cut off by attacks from Bulgaria and Albania directed toward Skoplje.

18. The industrial centers of Yugoslavia, on which the army currently depends for supplies, are located in the lowland border areas that would be overrun soon after hostilities had commenced. The better agricultural lands are in the same region and food would become a critical problem in the early stages of the campaign. Rail and motor routes from Trieste and Fiume would, in the event of an attack from Hungary, be cut off at an early stage.

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19. In spite of these important losses, the large mountainous area which includes Bosnia, Hercegovina and Montenegro is suitable for the organization and maintenance of a strong defense. Food and munitions are now being stored in the mountainous regions, but these supplies would be exhausted rapidly in the event of hostilities. Defense of this area, therefore, would depend on Western aid which could be supplied through several moderately good Adriatic Sea ports along the Dalmatian coast. These ports and their transportation facilities are, however, highly vulnerable to air attack. Also, the road and rail routes from Salonika are vulnerable to ground attack from Bulgaria and Albania. The mountainous defensive area would be vulnerable to enemy penetrations from the directions of Zagreb and Fiume if such penetrations were undertaken before the organization of defensive positions. Several points along the Dalmatian coast might be vulnerable to amphibious attacks launched from Albanian bases.

PROBABLE OUTCOME OF A SOVIET OR SATELLITE INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

20. Tito's regime is unlikely to be overthrown by any small-scale or surreptitious operation. To insure the destruction of the regime, there would have to be a full-scale invasion, either by all the neighboring Satellite armies, by some of them with

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overt assistance of Soviet armed forces, or by Soviet forces alone.

21. Soviet armed forces could successfully invade Yugoslavia, overcome organized resistance, and eventually bring guerrilla opposition under control. Under present circumstances, it is estimated that organized Yugoslav resistance could be destroyed within one month. The elimination of guerrilla opposition would take considerably longer and would depend on the extent of outside aid to the guerrillas and the scale of the Soviet effort. Timely Western aid could considerably lengthen the period of resistance to a Soviet invasion.

22. In present circumstances, particularly in view of the superior logistical position of the satellites, the Yugoslav armed forces are incapable of successfully opposing an invasion by the combined forces of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Albania. It is estimated that organized resistance against this force would continue for about three months and probably no more than four months under the most favorable defensive conditions. Yugoslavia would probably be able to defend itself against an invasion by satellite forces alone, if it were provided with substantial Western military assistance. Such assistance, however, would have to include aid in the form of equipment

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which could be readily integrated into Yugoslav units delivered to Yugoslavia several months prior to an invasion. In addition, aid would have to be on a continuing basis. In the last analysis, Western support would have to be on a scale large enough to neutralize Soviet logistical support to the satellite forces.

LIKELIHOOD OF SOVIET OR SATELLITE INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA DURING 1951

23. Since early in 1950 there have been indications of increasing military preparations in the satellite states. The strength of their armed forces has been substantially increased. These forces have been re-equipped with Soviet materiel to a large extent and have engaged in increasingly large-scale maneuvers, occasionally with Soviet occupation forces in Hungary and Rumania. Except for Albania, they have substantial numbers of Soviet T-34 tanks, and more recently JS heavy tanks and self-propelled guns have appeared with the Hungarian forces. Extensive gas and food rationing suggests stockpiling. Civilian defense measures have been undertaken. Increased registration for military service, including the medical profession, has been instituted, and security measures have been tightened. Satellite troops have been concentrated on the Yugoslav border and border incidents have increased. There have been rumors from Cominform circles of

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an impending attack on Yugoslavia in the spring. The Cominform has renewed its propaganda alleging that Yugoslavia intends to attack Albania and Bulgaria. For the first time Tito himself has begun to admit uneasiness. He has given serious consideration to seeking arms from the West and has attempted increasingly to tie Yugoslavia to the UN program of collective security. He has improved his relations with Austria, Italy, and Greece.

24. The scope of the recent Satellite military and logistical preparations in the area and the intensity of the Cominform propaganda campaign against the Tito regime indicate that the USSR has been laying the groundwork for a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia. Although there is no evidence that a final decision has actually been reached, an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 in which Satellite forces are used must be considered a serious possibility.

25. There are a number of considerations that might impel the USSR to attack Yugoslavia in 1951 rather than later:

(a) The Kremlin may estimate that:

(1) Yugoslav forces cannot maintain a successful organized resistance without military

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supplies from the Western Powers. By his recent pronouncement in opposition to outside help, Tito has waived an opportunity to hasten such aid if he has not actually delayed the initiation of any aid which could be effective to meet a 1951 invasion.

(2) Even if Tito should now urgently appeal for such assistance and obtain the full compliance of the US and the Western Powers, it is doubtful if military supplies of appropriate types and in sufficient quantity could be delivered in time to be effective during 1951.

(3) The Western European Powers are ill-prepared to defend themselves against possible Soviet moves in their vital home areas and would not accept the risks attendant upon sending armed contingents to Tito in 1951.

(4) The US, whose commitments of ground forces and tactical air in the Korean war plus its obligation to bolster the NAT powers by enlarging its total defensive force in Western Europe, plus the necessity to husband its strategic air power for its critical mission against the USSR, would be

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unlikely at this time to allocate forces to Yugoslavia.

This consideration may well lead the Kremlin to conclude that, if Yugoslavia is to be invaded, 1951 is a more favorable time to do so vis-a-vis Yugoslavia's ability to resist than later. (Although there are some indications that if an attack is to be made in 1951 it will be made in the spring, it should be noted that Hungarian forces will not be fully ready to invade until the training of new recruits now in process is completed in mid-1951.)

(b) The Kremlin may also estimate that the repercussions of a successful invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951 would be more advantageous to the USSR than an invasion at a later time because:

(1) 1951 is a crucial time in the initiation and implementation of NATO plans. The Kremlin may estimate that a successful attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 would so demoralize and intimidate a substantial portion of the peoples of Western Europe as to greatly hamper their governments in energetic implementation of NATO plans. The Kremlin may estimate further that such an invasion, if success-

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ful, would even render certain Western European nations susceptible to appeals for accommodation with the USSR. The Kremlin may also expect greater effects of the same kind in the Middle East.

(2) The likelihood of achieving these results by a successful invasion of Yugoslavia may appear to the Kremlin to be progressively less in ensuing years by reason of the anticipated progress of NATO and US rearmament.

26. The Kremlin may estimate that it would be able to launch an attack on Yugoslavia. If the Kremlin decides on such an attack, it may choose one of the following courses of action:

(a) It may launch a full-scale joint Satellite-Soviet attack. Although the Kremlin may estimate that open Soviet participation would involve a greater risk of US atomic counterattack on the USSR than would an attack by the Satellites alone, it may conclude that this course of action would achieve such prompt and decisive results as to confront the Western Powers with a fait accompli before they could effectively intervene.

(b) We believe, however, that the Kremlin would be more likely to launch the attack with Satellite forces

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alone in the initial stages of the campaign. The Kremlin may estimate that this course of action would not be likely to provoke an immediate US atomic counter-attack on the USSR. By using Satellite forces alone, the USSR might expect that the apprehensions of the UN powers concerning a general war with the USSR would prevent any effective UN action against either the Satellites or the USSR and that the US would thus be confronted with the dilemma of either intervening unilaterally or refraining from intervention in the interests of Western unity. It may further estimate that in the event of US or UN intervention in Yugoslavia this course of action would enable it to avoid any overt clash between Soviet and US forces and to obviate any incident of the campaign likely to provoke a US atomic attack on the USSR. This course of action would permit the USSR, if need arose during the campaign, to provide covert Soviet military aid to the Satellite while remaining officially aloof. In this event the Kremlin might anticipate at the best that it could insure a victory without provoking a US atomic attack on the USSR, and at the worst it would be able to call off its Satellites if the conflict threatened to expand into a general war.

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In the event of a warning or ultimatum, the USSR might expect to be able to withdraw from the campaign and negotiate a settlement before the US launched its atomic attack.

27. The Kremlin may also estimate that, regardless of the particular form of attack on Yugoslavia, there are general factors which might deter the US from attacking the USSR with the atomic bomb:

(a) Possible unwillingness of the US to use the atomic bomb without UN sanction, and the unlikelihood of obtaining UN sanction for its use in 1951.

(b) General US reluctance to bear the onus of initiating an atomic war.

(c) Particular US reluctance to initiate an atomic war in behalf of Tito.

(d) General reluctance of the US to jeopardize its own key target cities to Soviet atomic retaliation, particularly before the American people had been more fully prepared psychologically for all-out war and until the US had improved its civil defenses and its defense against atomic retaliation.

28. On the other hand, the Kremlin may estimate that even a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia would involve a greater

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risk of general war with the US than it was prepared to accept during 1951. Considerations leading to this conclusion might be:

(a) That in view of US-UN action in Korea and Yugoslavia's membership in the Security Council, UN forces would intervene immediately in Yugoslavia even though they might not take direct action against the USSR. The intervention of UN forces might create a situation that would require Soviet intervention in support of the Satellite forces in the pattern of Chinese intervention in behalf of the North Koreans and thus carry with it grave risk that the conflict would lead to a general war between the US and the Soviet Union.

(b) That even though the Western European powers might be unwilling to go to war with the Soviet Union over Yugoslavia, the US might take the initiative alone. The USSR might find support for this conclusion in the strong public and governmental reaction in the US to the Korean episode, the extent and haste of subsequent US rearmament, US leadership in attempting to rearm Germany and Japan, various public statements by certain US officials advocating a preventive war, a suspicion that the US military leaders might welcome the occasion to use

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their atomic capabilities before the USSR had further built up its retaliatory and defensive capabilities for atomic warfare, and the public statements of President Truman and Secretary Acheson with respect to US interest in the preservation of the independence of Yugoslavia.

29. In the final analysis, we are unable to estimate which of the above considerations are likely to be determining in a Soviet decision with respect to Yugoslavia. If the USSR estimates that it could launch a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia without grave risks of immediate US retaliation against the USSR and that it could withdraw successfully if US-UN reaction in Yugoslavia produced a situation that threatened to expand into a general war between the Soviet Union and the US, we believe that it will probably make the attack. We believe, furthermore, that if the USSR is prepared to accept war with the US during 1951 but does not wish to initiate it with a direct attack on the US and the Western Powers, an attack on Yugoslavia is also probable. On the other hand if the USSR estimates that an attack on Yugoslavia involves a serious risk of US retaliation against the USSR and if it is unprepared to accept this risk during 1951, we believe that the attack will not be made. We repeat, however, that the military and propa-

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ganda preparations which are unmistakably taking place in the  
Satellites indicate that an attack upon Yugoslavia in 1951  
must be regarded as a serious possibility.

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7. We believe that from the point of view of the Kremlin there may be impelling reasons for attacking Yugoslavia in 1951 rather than later. The Kremlin may estimate that Tito will obtain <sup>during 1951</sup> logistic support from the West/that would make the campaign more difficult subsequent ~~to 1951~~, that the repercussions of a successful invasion in 1951 would be more advantageous to the USSR than there ~~would be from an invasion~~ after NATO and US strength had been further increased, and finally, that an attack after an additional years' build-up of US and NATO strength would be more dangerous with respect both to the success of the invasion and the possibility of Western counteraction against the USSR itself.

8. We are unable to estimate whether or not the USSR will launch an attack on Yugoslavia during 1951. If the USSR estimates that it could launch a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia without grave risks of immediate US retaliation against the USSR and that it could withdraw successfully if US-UN reaction in Yugoslavia produced a situation that threatened to expand into a general war between the Soviet Union and the US, we believe that it will probably make the attack. We believe, furthermore, that if the USSR is prepared to accept war with the US during 1951 <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ does not wish to initiate it with a direct attack on the US and the Western Powers, an attack on Yugoslavia is also probable. On the other hand if the USSR estimates that an attack on Yugoslavia involves a serious risk of US retaliation against the USSR and if it is unprepared to accept this risk during 1951, we

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believe that the attack will not be made.

9. However, the scope of the recent Satellite military and logistical preparations and the intensity and character of the Cominform propaganda campaign against the Tito regime indicate that the USSR has been laying the groundwork for a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia. Although there is no evidence that a final decision has actually been reached, a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 must be considered a serious possibility.

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clean up draft today

draft to IAC reps Monday

IAC Reps only 2:30 Thurs

IAC Tues

1030

Tuesday

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